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## Jared Leto on movies, tech and the Met Gala



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Culture Matters

## **Jared Leto on movies, tech and the Met Gala**

**The actor, fashion aficionado, musician, and startup executive opens up.**

by Claire Atkinson / May.11.2018 / 4:48 AM ET

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Few people in Hollywood have just one job. Jared Leto, however, has at least five.

The actor-musician, who played The Joker in “Suicide Squad” and received an Academy Award for his performance as a transgender woman in [“Dallas Buyers Club.”](#) is also a filmmaker, a fashion aficionado, and a tech investor.

That is, of course, when he isn’t on tour with his band, “30 Seconds to Mars.”

And then there’s Fandor. A year ago, Leto took on the role of chief creative officer at the streaming movie service, which specializes in independent movies and award-winning international pictures. Leto spoke with NBC News on a range of topics, including whether streaming movies should be able to compete at the [Cannes Film Festival](#). Netflix [didn’t attend](#) this year since the competition rules required new movies to debut in French cinemas first.



Lana Del Rey, left, and Jared Leto attend The Metropolitan Museum of Art's Costume Institute benefit gala celebrating the opening of the Heavenly Bodies: Fashion and the Catholic Imagination exhibition on May 7, 2018, in New York. Evan Agostini / Invision via AP

He’s also an investor in a variety of tech companies including Uber, Spotify and Airbnb, and shares some thoughts about his next bet, whether Facebook deserves its current bad rap, and creativity at The Met Gala — which he recently attended, clad in a Gucci suit topped by a gold-colored crown. This interview has been lightly edited for clarity.

*Q: The Cannes Film Festival just started. Any thoughts on whether it should admit streaming movies or how the Academy of Motion Pictures should deal with streaming movies that have a limited theatrical run?*

A: I think it's probably a mistake to tell the French how to run their festival. They're doing a good job of protecting culture in France. That's something to listen to a bit before the knee-jerk reaction. Accusations, calling the French antiquated or whatever else, that may be true, but it may be interesting to talk about how to create a different solution at the film festival. Maybe they'd be open to other types of films that weren't in theaters. Maybe that's a suggestion that would make people rest a bit easier — a section of Cannes where these films can be celebrated and appreciated.

The issue is, though, what is a film? Some of the series are more like movies that you watch. When they're making eleven [sequels], virtually, it's hard even count sequels to some of these films out there. And does that make them a giant TV show?

Some of the limited series are incredibly filmic and really well done and have given a home to dramatic actors whether it's the "[Handmaid's Tale](#)," or whatever your favorite film is. Some are better than most movies.

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There may be a few missing silos [when it comes to streaming.] I think that people will figure out they can create a film festival where there is a business, an economy. Anyone who doubts the French respect for their culture, they know what they're doing. You only have to drive to the South of France.

Thank God for streaming or I wouldn't have done very many films over the past few years. Everyone has incredibly busy lives. Time is really precious. We can stream where and when we want to — the incredible luxury. It's kind of a bit of "television killing the radio" fear. There will always be a place for the community experience of films [in cinemas]. That's a fun thing to go do. It's not like people don't want physical experiences, but more people want to watch this content in the comfort of their homes, or on the move.

*Q: Let's talk about your tech investments. You own stakes in Uber, Spotify, Airbnb, or have sold out of any of those holdings?*

A: It's something I've been doing quite some time now, nearly a decade. I get to work with some of the smartest people in the world. To witness some of these transformative technologies that change the way we live, work.

[Slack](#) [a workplace messaging service] is an interesting one. I've been an investor in [Slack](#) for quite some time, and the company has made our lives more cohesive and more a community and made it a bit more fun and killed our email stacks.

Robinhood [a stock trading app] is a fascinating company. I'm an early investor in [Robinhood](#), and I've watched it become valued at [\\$5 billion](#). It's a stock trading app. It has a future that is exciting, and I decided to come along for the ride.



Jared Leto attends a launch party in Los Angeles on April 6, 2018. Mario Anzuoni / Reuters

I would put Airbnb on the list too. It's a smart company, showing us the opportunities that are right under our noses to have more inclusive experiences around the world, the act of sharing your home and being able to open up travel and hospitality in a way that was unheard of. [Brian \[Chesky, Airbnb CEO\]](#) has built a beautiful company.

*Q: I'd like to ask you about Facebook. Social media has had a powerful effect on society, but recently Russian-backed actors invaded the platforms with fake content. How do you feel about the social media environment now and Facebook in particular?*

A: Propaganda has been a tool for regimes, political parties, bad actors for, I would say, thousands of years in some form or another. That's nothing new. I'm not so shocked at it. If you can do it, someone is going to take advantage of data on Facebook to serve their cause. If I'm a bad actor, yeah, I'm going to do it. If you leave your keys in your car on the street, then someone may steal it.

I think that Facebook is going to make sure it doesn't happen again. If I was going to bet on someone, I'd bet on [Facebook chief executive] Mark Zuckerberg. It doesn't seem like he likes to f--- around. He's going to get s--- done.

It's absolutely insane that anyone interfered with democracy in the U.S. It's a mind-blowing concept in general. We are still in the wild west, fake news, spammers using advertising to fool people into anything and everything.

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It's a digital and social revolution in the way people are able to communicate quickly and easily to spread an idea and a message. And it can be a beautiful thing like the Arab Spring, or a nasty thing like interference with the

truth. I guess it's a representation of who we are. Hopefully we'll see more kindness and meaning and a little bit less of the other things.

*Q: You have been chief creative officer at indie movie streaming service Fandor for a year. Can you tell us what you've been doing in that role?*

A: I'm proud to be associated with people that are helping us get connected to the content we want to spend our time consuming. There is a bit of a cereal box syndrome that is happening now in the world, where we are stuck in the aisle in the supermarket; the amount of choices that you have. Fandor has done a really good job of curation and giving people that are cinephiles a home.

*Q: What are your new projects at Fandor?*

The next steps would be to continue to create awareness that there's this great home for film lovers. There's many times I've opened up a platform and I've been at a loss as to where to go and what to focus on. When I'm at Fandor, the issue is how to find the time to watch all of the great content.

I've been focused on the topic of how we make it more of a social experience. I always think it's incredibly important to be celebrating filmmakers, people who have taken an independent, brave path and highlighting filmmakers and giving filmmakers a chance to speak directly to audiences.

Take the idea of a playlist and push it to the forefront, I'm sure the world would love to know what [Darren Aronofsky's](#) top ten films are, or would love to hear from [David Fincher](#) what are the most underappreciated movies of the past ten years. Those are some of the things I'd love to see be brought to life.

*Q: You were at the [Met Gala's](#) "Heavenly Bodies: Fashion and the Catholic Imagination" earlier this week? Did you have any favorite outfits?*

A: It was good to support the cause, and to support The Met [Museum] and to work with the Gucci family. It's good to have fun with the Gucci gang, as we say. You see some of the craftsmanship that goes into what people do. Some of that gets lost by the power of celebrity and a photograph. It is a fascinating thing to be at. I talked to [Chadwick Boseman](#), who looked great. I thought [Rihanna](#) looked fantastic. People have fun with it: it's incredible; it's fun; it's funny and it's fashion.

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